



# UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 8  
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REF:EPR-ER

## INITIAL POLLUTION REPORT

California Gulch - Upper Arkansas Fluvial Tailings Site  
OU11- Removal #22

### I. HEADING

Date: September 25, 2000  
Subject: Removal #22 @ OU11 - California Gulch  
From: Mike Zimmerman, OSC  
To: Patty Smith, EPA Headquarters  
POLREP No.: Initial POLREP #1

### II. BACKGROUND

Site No.: 29 (OU11) [RV 22]  
Response Authority: CERCLA  
NPL Status: Yes  
State Notification: Yes  
Action Memorandum: Approved - 06/09/00  
Start Date (Removal) 08/10/00  
Completion Date: N/A

### III. SITE INFORMATION

#### A. Incident Category

CERCLA, Time Critical, Fund-Lead

#### B. Site Description

##### 1. Site description

The portion of the Arkansas River to which this Removal Action applies is located in Lake County, Colorado, and begins at the confluence of California Gulch and the Arkansas River. It is a part of the California Gulch



NPL Site and the areas described are a part of the Alternatives Analysis which was completed in May of 1999 (Located in Administrative Records File). The area of this Removal Action focuses upon 18 small areas in a series of tailings along the Arkansas River south of the confluence with California Gulch. These locations are adjacent to the present course of the Arkansas River, and fluvial tailings are eroding into the water on a daily basis.

## 2. Description of Threat

Mine tailings from the Leadville historical mining activity, transported by glacial and fluvial processes, were carried downstream via California Gulch to the Arkansas River and deposited in many locations adjacent to the River. The Arkansas River is used for recreation, irrigation of agricultural lands, and irrigation of range lands. Irrigation of rangeland and agricultural land may have contributed to elevated levels of metals in animals and plants. High metal concentration along riverbanks has reduced or eliminated riverside vegetation and increased erosion potential. High metal concentration in stream water has caused degradation of fish habitats, recreational areas, and agricultural land.

## C. Site Evaluation

An initial evaluation was accomplished in 1998 - i.e., Sampling Activities Report - Upper Arkansas Fluvial Tailings, Leadville, Colorado, January 15, 1999; and Alternatives Analysis - Upper Arkansas River Fluvial Tailings, Lake County Colorado, May, 1999. These analyses helped EPA decide upon sites for the Removal Action

## IV. RESPONSE INFORMATION

### A. Situation

#### 1. Removal actions to date

On August 10 of 2000, EPA's removal contractor mobilized to the Site and is preparing the fluvial

tailings for *in-situ* treatment involving tilling, addition of lime, compost and biosolids, and eventually revegetation.

## 2. Future Actions

The remediation area will be cultivated, seeded, and hydrohatched prior to the on-set of the 2000 winter. During Spring of 2001, the areas will be evaluated to determine if germination and a good stand of grass has been established. Thereafter, environmental monitoring will continue for the near future.

### B. Enforcement

Costs will be determined and the Enforcement Specialist and Enforcement Attorney will make recommendations for cost recovery.

## V. COST INFORMATION

This Removal is a part of the total California Gulch NPL Removal; the costs for this portion of the NPL removal are projected to be approximately \$300,000.